

INTRODUCTION: 16th Sept. SCRIPT Inappropriate by Cathy Bray

(Slide 1 – POSTER *inappropriate*)

Stage directions: LIGHTS TO FLICKER ON AND OFF then LEAVE FULL LIGHTS ON as warning that the show's about to start...

(Slide 2 – sub-heading: *inappropriate – on so many levels*)

(Slide 3 – BUBBLE Scene Introduction: Tickets Please + VOICE BUTTON)

Stage directions: OFF STAGE VOICE OVER by female day-release supervisor!

“Here’s Fringe Triple Offender, Cathy Bray, back with her one-woman show of poetry and merriment – entirely inappropriate and ***Without a Leg to Stand On....***”

(Slide 4 – Poem title: (Without) A Leg to Stand On)

Stage directions: Cathy comes on – walking through audience, with red wine plus hockey stick – she’s tipsy but with attitude in uniform and reciting her poem:

Pretentious ? Moi?

Ego-centric? I ?

Judgemental ? Me ?

Tickets please!

What do you mean

you didn’t know

you had to have one?

Ticket sales are on your left,

by the Confessional.

And make it snappy -

The show’s about to start!

Cathy, **SIT DOWN pours herself a drink and gets comfortable in arm chair while scowling reflectively at the audience)**

Somebody turn those dammed spotlights

Off high beam! **(Stage directions – LIGHTS OFF FROM BODY OF AUDIENCE)**

You trying to blind me?

Okay settle down!

(Slide 5 – BUBBLE Scene 1: Hell's Bells)

HELL'S BELLS

I hate weddings – not the getting married part or the eating, drinking or getting smashed part. It's the frigging non-negotiable rituals...

It all started when I was a 5 and a half year old flower girl at my father's wedding. My plaits had been lopped off at my step-mother's barber shop to make me look nice and neat .

My hair had been washed in Blue Clinic shampoo until it was so shiny that people were stopping in front of me to straighten their ties and check they didn't have any lipstick on their teeth. I was dressed in a powder blue velvet dress with puffed short sleeves and white lace collar – and no one gave a shit that my favourite colour was red and that I had loved having long plaits.

Before the wedding my auntie McScotland came up and threatened me about the consequences of not holding this bouquet of flowers really, really high, right under my chin. I am proud to say I walked down that long aisle at North Sydney with those flowers pointing **due south. (Cathy points straight to the floor)**

My next official gig was as a 12 year old bridesmaid at one of my brothers' weddings at the old Wentworth Hotel at Wynyard. **(Slide 6 : PHOTO of me at wedding in dress with David (the groom) laughing.)** I wore a pale blue velvet dress (long this time) and my hair was lacquered into a 1950s helmet turned up at the ends, with an idiotic little bow stuck on the top of it. It did not help that I was not allowed to wear makeup.

Two years later I did it all again. **(Slide 7 : PHOTO of Cathy as young boy in ice blue silk chantung dress)** By this time, I looked like a pubescent member of the Collaroy Plateau Under 15s rugby team who had been forced into his sister's ice-blue silk chantung dress for the afternoon. Only a 14 year old girl can understand the existential excruciation of having your boobs crushed into a Modesty Blaise bra so that the darts on the bodice can POINT and I mean give road directions .

(Slide 8 – BUBBLE (repeat of slide) Scene 1: Hell's Bells)

When the 4th wedding of the family came along (my step-brother's wedding at Roseville), I was tremendously relieved to find out that I had no official role whatsoever. I was laughing. That is, until I met the enforcer and king of wedding ritualisation, the M.C. at Hampton Court Reception Rooms.

He had rules, and he had rituals and he had exclusive use of the microphone. Towards the end of the fiasco he said **(Cathy, voice of Sandy Freckle)** "I'd like to invite all the ladies, and especially those **SINGLE** ladies," (I was the only woman THERE under 40) "to join the bride for the throwing of the **BRIDAL bouquet!**" So 15 of we pathetic stragglers aged between 19 and **90 years, assembled.**

Now I was at uni and had enjoyed 2 blissful years away from home so I may have had a bit of attitude, but when they told me to get in the circle and behave myself while the bride '**accidentally**' threw the bouquet at my chest it was like being ambushed on a lonely mountain track by a hunter with a loaded rifle. I was a gonner. A *slightly* pissed off gonner. I STILL remember, with my hands at my side, the sound of a full bouquet of white azaleas and roses making a kind of combat thud as they hit first, my cynical breast **(thwack)** and bounced.....untouched, shortly after, **(Cathy, look down – coldly and to the side very Judy Dench at the bouncing bouquet and back at the hateful MC)**, onto the jarrah dance floor at Hampton Court. **I hate weddings.**

And then of course there's that unbelievably crass **hit-list** called the wedding present register.At what other time in your life do people get access to your private shopping and financial decisions? All up it's a pretty sensitive topic and I don't want anyone less than ASIO, putting me on a register!

For some people gift-giving is a fear of intimacy or a fear of being in another's debt. Some people simply can't accept presents and overcome all their issues, by sooner or later, giving everything back.

Carl Jung of course, said gift-giving was a kind of aggression: *"Once I give you a present you owe me big time, **bitch!**"*

(Slide 9 – POEM title: Gift Giving as Aggression)

Gift Giving as Aggression

Like a naughty puppy
proudly returning a 3 month-old bone,
all dirt and grass-encrusted.
The pong just whiffing past us
as we try to liberate it
from his wet and playful jaws.

He growls 'Back off!'
But his eyes are laughing
with the audacity of it
and his mouth drools excited slobber
down his Cocker Spaniel coat.

Like a conniving school child
fibbing and hiding,
ferreting away the goodies
for some needy, wintry day...
then bringing them back victorious.

(Cathy, PAUSE)

After a respectable length of time,
you retrieve the specimens
(washed, dried and ironed)
and return each one
with great deliberation;

to me, the evil Giver.

(Slide 10 – BUBBLE Scene 2: Midwife's Lament)

Scene 2: Inappropriate – MIDWIFE'S LAMENT

Now a sane, calm birthing experience is a contradiction in terms for me. Yes I read the book but I really couldn't face the movie let alone the documentary.

I always got a high distinction in pregnancy and then pass-failed the births.

The first delivery I had every form of medical intervention known to man, short of a caesarian. The next was diagonal breech and the obstetrician announced my pelvis was too small to risk it which was news to everyone (especially, *yes, thank you*, **(Cathy nods to Geoff)** my husband); so I had one of those horse needles called an epidural and stayed conscious throughout. Still waiting for my Victoria Cross.

With my third birth looming, I thought *"God-dammit I'm gonna get it right this time"*. **(Cathy give audience time to connect)** So in I barrelled to King George V Hospital at 2.10 am in mid labour and the midwife, who I had met before and who I knew had had 4 children of her own and 17 years of midwifery under her uniform, got down to business and examined me.

Then she said the 7 words you don't want to hear from an experienced midwife : **(Cathy do very LONG, CONSIDERED EXPLORATION – with hand action of midwife coming across strange object in birth canal)** *"Ooh. OH. Mmmm. Umm, I'm feeling something I shouldn't be feeling."*

What? A hairdryer? A jar of Vegemite? No. It's a brow presentation and she's feeling a nose when she should be feeling the top of a head, which means the head is right back and that's the way babies get stuck and how women used to die in childbirth.

So she tells me I'll probably have to have a caesarian and she goes off to **ring** my doctor. She comes back very surprised, and she says "Well, he says it's up to *you*. And you can go on if you want to."

(Cathy, intense beat change) My husband grips the edge of the trolley **very hard** and holds his breath.

(Cathy, philosophical again) I can't quite put my finger on it but I smell a rat. (Or in my doctor's case, an extra half hour of precious sleep).

It reminds me of my big brother tossing a coin for something when I was little and saying '**Heads I win - tails you lose**' ... and I'm sensing without knowing why, that this game is not going to get me the lolly I want.

(Cathy, leaning forward and confiding to the midwife:)

I lean in very carefully to make sure she's hearing me, 'Okay, I don't care how I get this baby out. Can you please go and ring the doctor again. Tell him no hurry,

(Cathy, looks at her watch) any time in the next 10 minutes will be fine...

(Cathy, with ENERGY not volume:) **GET OVER HERE AND GIVE ME A CAESARIAN!**

(Cathy, calm again:) And my husband stops holding his breath.

Here are two poems about two friends of mine and their 3rd birthing experience at Royal Women's Hospital.

At the time, I heard the **Chaucerian version first from her husband**, and then, later **the same story** from *his wife's perspective* ...

Cathy STAND UP for the 2 poems...

(Slide 11 – POEM title: The Husband’s Tale)

Cathy STAND – stage LEFT

The Husband’s Tale

Oh God it’s good to be back. Back for another Grand Final. Nine months prep as usual. It was so easy this time! Though Janie did have morning sickness early on - that’s why we hope it’s a boy. Normally (with both the girls) she’s been a picture of health, feels like a million bucks when she’s pregnant. In we go...that reassuring blast of antiseptic. Though the nurses are much more laid-back at the Birth Centre. Or maybe it’s just that we know them all so well. Good. Rosa’s here tonight – we really like her. Oh God I’ve got to watch Jane – three pushes and she has them, you know. She yells at me, she can’t go on (though we’ve only been here 5 minutes). I call Rosa in and she nods. Unbelievable! Time’s up! The head splits Janie. Well, seems to divide her, anyway. How that head fits through there I’ll never know. Oh - bounce!! Rosa’s caught her as she – no, *he* - shoots out. I can’t take my eyes off his balls. Has he really got a dick? Now who’s he look like?... **Oh my god - his face is missing! A hole.(Cathy STOP and see the baby)** A great gaping hole from ear to ear. (Rosa says, *‘It’s a boy Jane. He’s got a split lip.’*) **(Cathy FALLING SENSATION)**The pine bed post comes up and scrapes me *really* hard on my way down to the floor. I am out cold. I am horrified. I’ve been punished. I’m not sure why, but it will be easy enough to think of something later on. The all-consuming bonds of experience and pain in-common, wrap round me like the swaddling on our baby.

(Slide 12 – POEM title: Third Time Un-lucky) Cathy STAND – stage RIGHT

Third Time Un-lucky

The greys and greens of hospital efficiency
The light in puddles on the lino floor.
The whole room lists slightly to one side.

The pendulum swings.
A sound, **(Cathy coldly distracted to the side)** the dull thud of my husband
hitting the floor.
We ignore him.

The midwife, rock solid, examines my baby.
'This is fine', she says 'It's not a cleft palate.
Only a split lip.'

These days (oh wondrous surgery)
The first operation will take place at 9 weeks.
Another at 6 months, by 12 he will be perfect.

The nurse holds him like an icon.
And I am his Madonna.
I take my perfect child

Just slightly chipped around his porcelain face.
The mistake only serves to underline
And emphasise his beauty.

His father, the mere mortal.
Hauls himself up onto the bed
And collapses next to me.

I suddenly remember his stupid sister-in-law
Telling me this sort of thing
Is punishment for promiscuity.

Fortunately I believe God is not such a bastard. **Cathy, go and SIT DOWN**

(Slide 13 – BUBBLE Scene 3: Babyboarding)

(Cathy, SITTING, slug some more wine and confide in the audience)

I got something I need to get off my chest. Or more specifically that I have to get off the chest of parents everywhere!

My question is this: ‘What sick, sick Baby Health Centre nurse or neo-natal intern who doesn’t like children, decided it would be a top idea to strap defenceless babies to the front of their oldies in the manner of a Michelin Man cartoon?’

(Slide 14: PHOTO Michelin Man cartoon)

Cathy, make appropriate pneumatic cheeked face of child with arms outstretched on parent’s chest

You know what I’m talking about . In the olden days, when I was a mother, we were given big lectures we didn’t even need, about bonding with our babies and the fact that babies can’t even focus properly for the first couple of weeks so you had to wrap ‘em in tight facing you, so they could smell your milk and if you grinned hard enough they could catch your smile.

We talked flat out to our kids and goddamit we had unconditional eye contact – *look at me kid I’m talking to you.* I remember Andrew Denton saying for as long as he can remember he was in his cot being straight man listening to his father’s jokes. So that’s the sort of bonding and demanding parents we were!

So my point is this: ‘Who decided to turn the babies away from their parents in a kind of baby boarding?’

A friend said to me ‘*Oh I think they’re cute. They look like figure heads on the prow of a ship*’ Oh right! Except that’s SEA spray – have you stopped to think what happens when he remembers he needs a quick slash **(Cathy, start to undo fly around the side of the baby)** before they go on the Bay Run?

(Cathy, imitates baby squirming and turning face away in horror but unable to bend elbow enough to reach or hold nose.)

No but really, I blame Michael Jackson.

– no think about it. It all started when he hung that baby out over the balcony in Berlin. **(Slide 15: PHOTO of Michael Jackson holding the baby out of the window) ‘Ich bin ein *Bloody Idiot!*’**

It’s all connected – all this putting your baby out into the limelight before they’ve signed a workplace agreement. My 4 year old niece watched that little episode on the television and she told my brother ‘That baby’s gotta see a solicitor and call for a 3 month Performance Review of his own father.’

I just want to reassure you that of course I had a safe and wonderful babyhood with my loving father who for five years after the death of my mum, coped on his own as a single parent with 5 children.

(Slide 16: PHOTO of me with Dad and the boys)

When this Haiku first potato-printed itself on my sub-conscious, I must have been under 3 because I was still sleeping in a cot on our back verandah at Alexander Street.

It was freezing in winter and the glass louvers and the polished floorboards were so cold. Dad would get up early on Sunday mornings to check on me and give me and my 6 year old brother a ***‘a bobby dazzler, special breakfast treat’***.

(Slide 17 – POEM title: **Re : Birth – a string** **A HAIKU**

Re : Birth – a string **A HAIKU**

Daddy lines the bars

Of my cold cot

With cotton towels.

I can't eat his gift

Of Vegemite and honey

Offered with such care.

(Slide 18 – BUBBLE Scene 4: Recessive Gene)

Inappropriate-Scene-4 RECESSIVE GENE

I reckon that parenting of any kind should be automatically added to your CV.

If you have been humiliated by a 3 year old in the checkout line at Woolworths, and have managed to talk your way out of it, then as far as I am concerned, your conflict resolution skills are right up there with Kofi Anan and Bang Kee Moon.

When you have been at the coal face of parenting then the other bastards who have led lives of undisturbed sleep need to know that you have survived mind games, emotional manipulation and harassment equivalent to arm to arm combat in a war zone. **Forget the *baby*** – that was ***your partner*** trying to avoid getting up in the middle of the night.

And in fact even when you come back to work, from maternity leave, then you are still on active service, and you need a special work-place agreement with sleep-deprivation provisions, including a 5 year ban on breakfast meetings!

(Cathy, BIG PAUSE HERE)

And then,quite suddenly..... they go from living in a Huggies advertisement, clinging to your legs and saying “*I love you mummy*”and they have multiple piercings, Doc Martens and a stud in their tongue and have turned into teenagers.

AND at some point around or just after the HSC they turn on you...and the very artistic and articulate ones say things to you as they are getting out of the car, like

“Any talent your children have, has **nothing** to do with you....it was **a recessive gene!**”

(Slide 19 - CARTOON of Brunhilda + MUSIC BUTTON Ride of the Valkyries)

(Slide 20 – POEM title: Truculence (Teen Valkyrie)

TRUCULENCE (Teen Valkyrie)

Truculence storms out slamming the door
in high dudgeon.
Absolutely enraged, apropos of nothing
other than we are staying and she is out of here.

The anger of the middle child
which we can't understand.....

*I was the youngest in the most adored
and privileged of positions.
You, the oldest, using and abusing
the power that entailed.....*

And here our middling child
stuck between two book ends.

Every day an Icelandic crusade.
Our teen Valkyrie puts her horns on,
Her back-pack leaves her sword-hand free.
The 433 deposits her on the distant shore.

She strides the sand-hills scowling
and scans the far horizon.
A wave of relief washes over her
- *all* her friends are there.

Waiting for her, near The Valhalla.

(Slide 21 – BUBBLE Scene 5: Key Performance Indicator Blues) + MUSIC
Resolution Blues (no words)

Cathy, pour herself a drink then remembers how she feels and sings the title
I GOT THOSE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR BLUE...OOO...OOOZ!

So you wanna new job. And every day you go on Seek and you look in the Careers section of the Sydney Morning Herald and what you are searching for is a little bit of transparency and honesty in job advertising and conditions. **(Cathy, grin sarcastically) How's THAT working for you?**

(Cathy in female American voice over...)

“You will be an engaging Pollyanna do- gooder and people-pleaser. You will be reporting directly to the CEO, a megalomaniac borderline NARcissist whose soul is morbidly obese but who looks like a Weimaraner in an opera coat and as far as women in the workforce are concerned, is a devotee of the Nancy Reagan School of getting ahead :

“A woman can never be too thin or too rich!”

(Slide 22 : Photo of Weimaraner dogs in opera coats lounging around)

ALL your Key Performance Indicators will be changed without notice half way through your probationary period. The CEO will be sacked at some point and will blame you personally for his demise.”

No honestly, I love the way they move the goal posts. I got sacked from a job once because the CEO didn't like my perfume – which was odd, as I never wear perfume so I had no idea what she was talking about. Though she *did* accuse me of having **fish breath** too, which I thought was a **lot more interesting**. **(C absent mindedly and inappropriately, put two fingers in V over mouth)**

And speaking of goal posts...I love those all-male Board meetings. Now instead of visualizing them all sitting in the nude, I like to think of them as AFL goal referees who look like nerdy lab assistants.

Next time some panel's giving you a hard time in a Performance Review, just imagine them all as AFL referees and remember how when a goal is scored, *just* before they make that little stick 'em up sign, the crowd behind the posts is yelling at them "How big's your dick?" (**Slide 23: AFL referee stick –'em gesture**)
.....**Strangely soothing isn't it?**

Cathy, STAND UP now before lead in to the poem...

Of course there's only one thing **worse** than having a crazy Boss **yourself** ...
and that's when your partner has their **own problems** at work,
THINKS LONG AND HARD ABOUT IT....
and then SUDDENLY ANNOUNCES,
that from now on they're going to be'**WORKING FROM HOME!**'

(Slide 24 – POEM title: Working From Home)

Cathy, STILL STANDING.....

The poplars at the end of the garden
sway, slightly perplexed.
Feathers ruffle.
So, he will be working from home.
I start re-arranging the shopping
and stacking the garbage bins.

A carton of milk topples over,
implications flow down the back steps.
My cocoon will be ripped open
and light will flood in.
All my defenceless little rituals revealed
then over-exposed.

I see time management supervisors
with clipboards, roaming the corridors.
'But what do you DO all day?'
their only mantra.
'No, we can't factor in tantrums from 4 year olds.'
'Mental Health days? Never heard of 'em!'

'What do you mean
you're going over to Highgate Wood for a coffee?'

Cost cutting.

'The cleaner will have to go.'

Oh shit.

'Well down to once a month, for starters.'

And then the *Work to Rule* orders:
'No. I am NOT here. I'm working'
one minute
'Wanna go up the road for lunch?'
the next.

A banded prisoner now,
no longer free-range
with back-to-base monitoring.
Except that, I am already
at base.

**Cathy, go and SIT DOWN and take another SWIG of wine or other distraction
before DREAMS**

**(Slide 25 – BUBBLE Scene 6: Dreams) Cathy, SITTING DOWN...
DREAMS**

A lot of people can recall their dreams and can take great pleasure in recounting the whacky little episodes, which they can cinematically replay in minute detail, from the night before.

I can never remember my *ordinary* dreams, but I do a **very nice line in transport, and missed-commitment, NIGHTMARES.**

I specialise in extended self torture: the long journey on the wrong bus to the wrong destination (with only *some* of my children) while my husband and some dame I've never seen before, sit behind glass on the other side of the airport, listening to our final boarding call.

By now I'm on a suspension bridge **(Cathy sway hand like the moving bridge)** half way between that scene in *Midnight Express* **(Slide 26: PHOTO from Midnight Express)** when the girlfriend visits him in the Turkish prison and **(Slide 27 : PHOTO of Grand Central Station)** where the pervert in Klute runs across the elevated walkway at the end of Grand Central Station.

At about the $\frac{3}{4}$ mark of any dream, I wake up. **(Cathy, breathe)** And quite quickly, at the point of partial consciousness, **I always decide** (call it control issues, if you like) **(Cathy, blockbuster voice) to go back in!**

No really forget Euridyce and the underworld...**THIS is hell!** It's hell with pike and a backflip... it's **(Slide 28 : PHOTO Revenge of the Nerds)** *Revenge of the Nerds* meets **(Slide 29: PHOTO of The Matrix)** *The Matrix*. It's the cast of **(Slide 30: PHOTO Lampoon family off on holidays)** *National Lampoon* **completely roots** **(Slide 31: PHOTO different levels)** *Inception*.

From this point on the dream screenplays into pathetic farce as I try like a junkie's father to bribe my way out of the nightmare. I go around moving other people's chess pieces and cheating at Scrabble until it finally dawns on me that it's all over. I turn off the alarm.I get up, go into the shower and have a 30 minute day-mare, trying to remember why the bus-driver looked **so familiar.**

Cathy, STAY SITTING

(Slide 32 – POEM title: Fear a Bag Lady)

Cathy, STAY SITTING

Fear : A Bag Lady

I sat with Fear the bag lady
Her two blue plastic bags
Plumped full beside me
On the nightly bus.

She watched me and I
Smelled her blue-veined breath,
My worries magnified
And yet contained.

*With two blue plastic bags (Slide 33: PHOTO The Killing Fields)
A teenager did his chores Cathy, mime the violence and suffocation
Over the head and round the neck
Of a grown man in The Killing Fields. (Slide 34: BLANK SLIDE)*

Because I sat with Fear
And did not turn away
In disgust or start a conversation,
I brought her into focus.

I did not question her
But gave myself the time
To ask God or Mother Courage
To help me **stay the urge** to flee.

Because I sat with Fear
I saw my fingers torniqued
And caught up in her plastic.
I drew my hands away

And breathing once again
Flexed my fingers free and true,
Knowing I'd sat with Fear
And been gentle with her too.

**Cathy, get off the nightly bus LEAVE Fear BEHIND
and STAND UP WITH THE BOTTLE – complete change of pace**

Cathy, STANDING UP WITH THE BOTTLE – happier musing now

(Slide 35 – BUBBLE Scene 7: The Cathy Brays)

THE CATHY BRAYS

I don't know how many Cathy Brays there are in Sydney but there are 4 that I know *personally*. God knows how many of us have spread up and down the eastern seaboard and floated into inland Australia. As a species apparently we are *common as muck*.

I mean, the *Catherines* amongst us shouldn't complain. We've been given a sainthood..... and had a school named after us!

A couple of years ago, I caught up with the **FAMOUS** Cathy Bray when she rang to re-schedule an orchestra rehearsal for my daughter who was in a fundraiser with the Sydney Youth Orchestra. I answered the phone and Cathy Bray and I had a short Monty Pythonesque routine identifying ourselves.

Anyway she soon pulled rank because a) she was about 3 years older than me and b) because she was **THAT** Cathy Bray who had appeared in a number of Cremorne Music Hall productions and more importantly, (and on more than one occasion) in a bikini on Page 3 of the *Manly Daily*. **(Slide 36: PHOTO of Cathy Bray in bikini - the famous one)** At that time my father was the President, of the Collaroy Mens' Amateur Swimming Club and when other fathers came up to him and said "Gee, Lionel, I saw your daughter in the paper!" My Dad, not wanting to disappoint them, would reply helpfully "*Yes, she's a good sort, isn't she?*"

Funnily enough, we still have a kind of infectious and self-limiting disease in our family too, regarding the **naming of first-born MALE children....**

Cathy, still standing to go straight into poem including title: Lionels

(Slide 37 – POEM title: Lionels)

Cathy, **still standing...**

Lionels

'This place,' my father said,
 'Is lousy with Lionels.'
 Roaring, reckless Lionels
 Laughing, frightening Lionels
Only joking, Lionels.

Brother Lionels
 Father Lionels,
 Cousin Lionels
 Uncle Lionels
 Nephew Lionels

As far as the eye can see
 Blinking Lionels!
 Stretching, yawning,
 Dozing Lionels.

Let sleeping cats lie.

Cathy, KEEP STANDING but PUT THE BOTTLE DOWN.....this next part is serious

(Slide 38 – BUBBLE Scene 8: Wet Blanket)

Cathy, KEEP STANDING until poem starts

WET BLANKET

In 2000, we only had a few more weeks left of a 3 year stint living in London.

One night, a friend who had been staying with us, was exploring how she would support herself and her teenage daughter after we had gone. She told us she wanted to find work teaching weaving in community arts programs.

That night in North London, we administered a near-fatal dose of completely unprovoked, unjustified and unsolicited **advice**.

It was one of those low moments where it only dawns on you later, that you have exceeded all previous and personal-bests and have set a new bench mark for offensive, tactless and cringe-worthy **behaviour**.

Cathy, SIT DOWN as if you have a job to do at the kitchen table and go straight into poem WET BLANKET without saying the title

(Slide 39 – POEM title: Wet Blanket)

Cathy, SITTING DOWN....

We had you cornered
Sitting at the kitchen table late that night
No breakfast sun
To throw down possibilities.

A particular kind of bastardisation
Of chest-poking derision
And Protestant pursing and nodding
We beige accountant bullies.

You held out the two years
Of basket weaving in Queensland
- the women's Dreaming.
You'd received a truth!

By such osmosis we saw
We had our work cut out.
But we were sure and smug
As prize-winners at Speech Day.

*You'll have to stop all this (Cathy turn and poke finger at her)
Finding-your-own-art nonsense
And start figuring out
How you're going to pay
The power bills and survive
A London winter.*

Newly elected class-captains
 We packed you off to bed.
 Yes we'd done the right thing
 Supported you so well.

Reading '**The Artist's Way**' that night (Slide 40: cover of **The Artist's Way**)
 I came to Chapter 10, **Wet Blankets!**
 The nasty mirror of recognition
Cracked from side to side.

Next morning with hands above my head
 I offer an apology, an unconditional surrender.
 I drag the dead weight blanket from your room
 And hang it out to dry.

(continue)

The woman who inspired that poem had the fullest Karma bank that I have ever come across. She stepped into the abyss in London and the Universe provided. First, with a vacant house in Tottenham and then for the next 12 years a beautiful Georgian double fronted terrace house in Camden, where two landladies played benign and benevolent rulers from their attic suite over a household of journalists and artists.

Cathy, stay SITTING DOWN

(Slide 41 – BUBBLE Scene 9: Gated Communities) Cathy, still SITTING

GATED COMMUNITIES

Okay - I admit it. I live in Balmain. But you can see just by looking at me that I have lived there a very long time. But I am still only *middle* school Balmain as far as the real, *old-school* Balmain residents (who go back 5 generations) are concerned.

In 1977 we got a house in Balmain and we learned very quickly that it would be really smart **NOT** to mention the fact that we were originally from the northern beaches or that we even *knew* anyone who supported the Manly Sea Eagles. So when we met a Balmain resident, and they said accusingly, ‘*So where do you live?*’ All we had to say was ‘We live next door to Geoff and Amy Small’ . The gate swung open, and we were ushered into the back bar of the Riverview or Dawn Fraser Pool or whichever hallowed ground we had tried unsuccessfully up till then, to enter.

You see Geoff had been the security guard at the old Colgate Palmolive factory and Amy was the much-loved secretary at Birchgrove Primary school for over 30 years; their kids played representative water-polo, rugby league and netball for Balmain. THAT’S old-school!

(Cathy new tone...) Over the next few years people started noticing Balmain, and sensing that great and highly prized intangible (which made them feel welcome and safe in Balmain) called *community spirit*. **Worth bottling!**

By the mid 1990s a bright spark had decided that if he couldn’t bottle it or barricade it, he’d protect this endangered phenomenon by gating and locking it. Here’s a photo **(Slide 42: PHOTO of Stack Street gates East Balmain)** of Balmain’s first (and last) gated community on the old Stack Street site in East Balmain. That’s *new-school* - with 4 bedrooms, box hedges and security cameras!

(Slide 43: BLANK) In the suburbia of my childhood we had no gates, very few fences, and hardly any locked or even lockable garages. Each day from the age of 8, I caught the school bus back from North Sydney and walked half a mile up the hill along Anzac Avenue. And as I came around the last corner, Mrs McAllister’s dog would be waiting for me..... **Cathy, STAND UP for Mrs McAllister’s Dog**

(Slide 44 – POEM title: Mrs. McAllister’s Dog)

Cathy, STILL STANDING.....

Mrs McAllister (with sugar bags for breasts)
 And a canvas gardening apron
 With pockets wide enough to collect
 The drooping ash
 From her perpetual cigarette.
 Ronnie? Lennie? Stevie?
 If I can’t name her can I tell her story?

It will come. **(Cathy lean down and pick up Globite suitcase)**

As surely as her sheep dog comes
 Each afternoon on Anzac Avenue,
 Growling and nipping at my heels
 Trained to bring in *thousands*
 Now down to me, his one last sheep.

My sole defence, *discovered by trial and error*
 Was to start singing a hymn

**(Cathy with Globite suitcase avoiding eye contact with the dog and humming:
 ‘from heav’n he came and sought her to be his only bride, with his own car he
 bought her’)**

To *his* ears a doleful puppy whining,
 A rolling on my back, non-threatening tune
 Which threw him out of kilter.

Mrs McAllister, (I only ever called her this)
 Would scold him like her favourite son
 Approvingly to heel. He came behind, besotted
 With her and with the game.

Cathy, SIT DOWN and pour yourself another drink – your’re nearly there

(Slide 45 – BUBBLE Scene 10: Quarantine)

Cathy, **SITTING DOWN** now

Quarantine

In the olden days, like many Sydney families , we went on a yearly surfing pilgrimage, **more sacred than the Hajj**, up the north coast of NSW, past Wategos and the whaling station at Byron Bay and on to Tweed Heads and Coolangatta.

(Slide 46 – north coast surf with Holden and surfboards)

We had my brothers' surfboards strapped to the boardracks, we played I-Spy, and sang along with the Ukelele. We stayed at '60s motels that reeked of moth balls and disinfectant with cold starched sheets, chenille bedspreads and slightly stained carpet. And we ordered leather eggs and bacon on white bread with preservative added orange juice and very strong tea, for breakfast.

And we **loved** it!

And just before we got to Queensland, having completely forgotten those 3 avocados in the glove-box, we had our first experience of feeling a little bit illegal in our own country...

**Cathy, STAY SITTING and go straight into reading of Poem with title:
Forbidden Fruit**

(Slide 47 – POEM title: Forbidden Fruit)

Cathy, STAY SITTING

Forbidden Fruit

When winding our way up to the border
 through the hilly back-blocks
 above the flattened canefields
 we would always come by accident
(and never cease to be amazed)
 upon a quarantine station
 in the middle of nowhere
 checking for forbidden fruit.

A censor dog on high alert
 would come around the iron gate
 to round us up and relay our arrival.

We'd stop beside the inspector's titivated cottage
 with newly painted gnomes toffee applied in the grass,
 china frogs and flowering cactuses elbowing out
 the spilling geraniums.

Cuttings prospered in every rusting can
 rescued for the purpose by Eve
 unseen behind the fly-screen door.

While passionfruit and chokos ran unchecked
 we waited 'guilty until proven innocent'
 amongst the tyre swans. After an age, the boot slammed shut
 and we were free to leave.

Cathy, STAY SITTING

(Slide 48 – BUBBLE Scene 11: Licence to Change)

LICENCE TO CHANGE

Cathy, STAY SITTING

These days you need a licence to scratch yourself, as well as proof of age, Responsible Service of Alcohol certification and a ticket to get into anything. There's on-line registration and paperwork everywhere!

You know I am not that keen on seeking permission or following rules, however there are some non-negotiable exceptions that prove the rule...

Firstly, there is union-enforced licencing and on this one particular topic, our house is a union-approved, 'work to rule' site. To this day, despite everyone having attended some type of tertiary institution, I remain the only person in our household with a licence to change a toilet roll.

Then there is ticketing – especially the wildly expensive ticketing for live concerts.

My daughters took me to my first Lily Allen concert a few years back (Slide 49: **PHOTO Lily Allen**) and as we lined up outside the Metro on George Street, my daughter turns to me and says 'Okay mum, you know there's no seating in there?'

YES!!! I'm cool with that! Or as my son used to say, channeling the mother in Mean Girls..... (*Cathy American accent hand on hip dance move for regular*) "Cause you're a *cool* mum, not a *regular* mum, (*Cathy conspiratorial wink for second cool*) but a *cool* mum" I mean Christ, you'd think I'd never been to the Norton Street Cinema or the Verona – I KNOW ABOUT FREE FOR ALL SEATING! Okay so we get inside and I discover she meant...NO *CHAIRS*.

The ritual humiliations never stop for most of us. There's passports and visas and birth certificates and customs There's always some bureaucrat or examiner or customs' officer on the look out to put us in our place. If only we had the guts to stand up to them...

Cathy, STAND UP - for reading of Poem **with title:** Light Motive

(Slide 50 – POEM title: Light Motive) Cathy, STANDING....

Light Motive

I've always been searching for that little
I don't know, what do you call it,
A little je ne sais quoi of guts
Instead of the rather large suitcase
Of personal baggage which I drag
From one stop light to the next.

A customs officer at Brisbane airport
Eyed me suspiciously and after
Making me unpack every shell and sock and sandal
And lay it out on the black bench top
He had my number and told me
That there was nothing else he could do for me
Short of a full body search.

Now in moments of peace or in the shower
When I think of ALL the things **I *could have said*** **(Cathy, let audience have time to think and MOVE TO OTHER side of stage to enact Lola Nelson**

I remember how Lola Nelson coming back
From a trip to Calcutta floating in patchouli oil
Ran out into the main hall and said
'If you want to do a full body search
Just do it out here'.

Her kohl eyes scanned the enemy
A little je ne sais quoi of fearlessness
She stood her ground , her bravery
There on her shield, her leit motif for all to see
Turned up on the morning NEWS flash **(C slow down and look at bedside radio)**
of her former lover's bedside radio
in UCLA, and without even hearing her name **(C smile, with recognition)**
He knew it was her.

Cathy, STAY STANDING....FOR ENDING

**Cathy, STAY STANDING....Stage Directions: LIGHTS FLASH ON OFF ON
Cathy rolling her eyes, says "What NOW ?!?"**

**(Slide 51 – BUBBLE Scene END: Lights Out + VOICE OVER
by off-stage female correctional centre guard / day-release supervisor!)**

**"Okay, well this has been fun, but Cathy, you're only on day-release and they're
expecting you back by 8 p.m. Curfew is at 9"**

(Slide 52 – POEM title: Curfew)

(Cathy, very pissed off, mutters "curfew cunt!")

enjambment
day release
special treat
paper clips
tarzan's grip
plasticine
rubber gloves
cling wrap
juggernaut
Vegemite
wedding bells
water slides
mouth guards
piss flaps
linoleum
love handles
big ears
huge jugs
jock straps
arm slings
tongue studs
safety belt
karma bank
jump on
hold tight
get a grip
no sweat
lights out!!!

LATERS, CUNTS! Cathy, walks out pretending not to care

(Slide 55 - Poster PLAIN GIRL)

Cathy, returns to take a bow AND STAYS IN CHARACTER.

Then Cathy thanks Adrienne.

Cathy asks everyone to join her downstairs in the bar and for dinner....

Cathy says thank you for coming and then leaves with **Thank you Slide 54** coming up

(Slide 54 - Thank You to....)

Slide 53 – END: A3 POSTER